

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

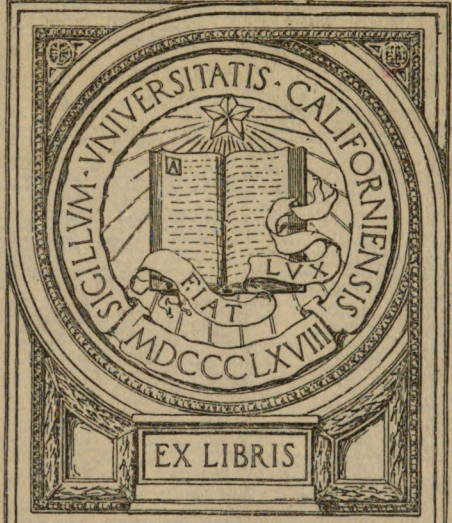
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

GIFT OF
Class of 1900



985
B873
v.
1922

The GRAVEDIGGER

By FRED EMERSON BROOKS

Published by
SATHER GATE BOOK SHOP
2307 TELEGRAPH AVENUE
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

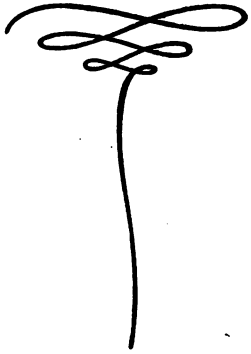
UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

The Gravedigger

(An Answer to the Rubaiyat)

By

FRED EMERSON BROOKS



PUBLISHED BY
SATHER GATE BOOK SHOP
2307 TELEGRAPH AVENUE
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

COPYRIGHT, 1922
BY
FRED EMERSON BROOKS
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Class of 1900

Digitized by Google

I

Aurora's steeds the darkness put to flight:
 Her golden arrows shoot athwart the dawn,
To rouse the laggard tenants of the night.
With rosy fingers tipped with morning light
 She plucks the dewdrops from the jeweled lawn.

II

The swallow dips unto the pebbled stream
 That runs away some purpose to fulfill:
To tempt the poet's song, the painter's dream,
Some barren patch of nature to redeem,
 Assuage the meadow's thirst or turn a mill.

III

Kind Nature solves her riddle on her scroll;
 Who solves the riddle of the man? asked I:
What is eternal life and what the goal
Of spirit radium we call the soul?
 I sought among the dead to get reply.

Digitized by Google

IV

I found a digger spading out a hole;
"What enterprise?" I asked. He doffed his hat
And then to help his brain he scratched his poll:
"A grave I dig for some departed soul
Who left his carcass here," and then he spat.

V

" 'Tis not for sympathy I dig, but pay;
The dirt's thrown in upon the selfsame terms;
Let common corpses molder how they may,
He was embalmed to last till Judgment Day
To please his friends and disappoint the worms.

VI

But yesterday a millionaire, I'm told;
A winding-sheet for all his hoarded gains;
At last he knows what truth the Scriptures hold;
Now penniless, his heirs have all the gold
Except the trifle paid me for my pains.

Digitized by Google

VII

In taking toll, he overlooked his share
And found what profit lies in hoarding pelf;
Deemed arrogance a substitute for prayer;
He left to others all his treasures rare
And took away the counterfeit himself.

VIII

I'm landlord here; my guests give little care;
They pay no rent, nor grumble in their bed,
Nor envy others for the robes they wear,
All crimes of greed and selfishness forswear—
They dwell in harmony—*because they're dead.*

IX

There lies a man who lived to feast and revel:
Each drunken night offset the sober day—
Base appetites bring all to that same level—
Brave in his cups he oft would toast the Devil,
Who now is *toasting* him the debt to pay.

Digitized by Google

X

'Tis poverty of mind that drives the soul
To seek oblivion with all senses mute,
Deaf, dumb and blind beside the toper's bowl;
Proclaim himself as void of self-control;
God gave to man and yet denied the brute.

XI

Here lies a man of toil at his repose,
His half a century in labor spent.
Small recompense for what he undergoes,
Since all he got was meager food and clothes
And somewhat over for the landlord's rent.

XII

If all would work, no toiler need despair;
Trails punishment hard after every fault;
An idle man makes some one do his share;
But few may profit by another's prayer
Or hide life's blunders in a marble vault.

Digitized by Google

XIII

Some worship still the calf of molten gold,
 Counting themselves much better than their kind;
Whereas they differ but in this, I'm told:
The poor at death take with them all they hold—
 The rich must leave their arrogance behind!

XIV

Out there sleeps one who was unjust in trade;
 To cheat the future was his last concern.
As rogues grow honest when the bargain's made,
He would by gift all penalties evade—
 Endowed a church in hope he would not burn.

XV

The boasting fool proclaims there is no God;
 Yet bows to Death, by whom no choice is made
'Twixt those who wear the crown or bear the hod;
The sexton laughs and flings on him a clod
 Who scorns the hope that lies beyond the spade.

Digitized by Google

XVI

When Nature frowns, the earth and sky turn black;
Mad lightnings rip the angry clouds to shreds;
The oath of Storm King *thunders* in their track:
But out of silence strides the seismic wrack
That breaks the ribs of mountains where it treads.

XVII

Then smiling Nature tints the sunset sky;
Her benediction spreads on land and sea;
Clouds dipt in wine are hung up there to dry
As weather-telling flags that prophesy
A bright and rosy day shall dawn for thee.

XVIII

A soldier lies in yonder nameless mound;
He took up arms for love of native land;
Remembrance died of some stray bullet-wound
And left him searching loved one, never found;
For whom he sought no one could understand.

Digitized by Google

XIX

The savage shot his arrow at the plow—
All savage tribes the plowman put to rout—
But wars and armies grow more savage now;
Nor will the slaughter cease till humans vow
Those planning war, alone, shall fight it out."

XX

"No leaf has grown in vain whose grateful shade
Falls on a sleeping babe," the sexton said.
"All things have purpose, every man his trade,
The soldier carries arms—I bear the spade;
Death lulls to sleep those I must put to bed.

XXI

The tomb of Hurry stands across the way;
To others master—to himself a slave;
Nor God's command to rest would he obey;
By crowding much into each single day
He shortened much his journey to the grave.

Digitized by Google

XXII

In yonder vault is housed the man of Greed;
Ambition gave him wealth, but left him cold;
His wife's caress he took with scanty heed;
His rival now, with more indulgent creed,
Has all the love, the widow and the gold.

XXIII

When woman loves, she breathes a single prayer,
Asking no more than love to match her own;
No sweeter incense has the world to spare,
But oh, the chill when she becomes aware
Her Altar's nothing but a polished stone.

XXIV

Full half the good in life we overrun,
As dogs, with greedy haste, gulp down their food;
How oft a youth, by vapid stranger won,
O'erlooks a lassie gentle as a nun—
A neighboring Venus 'neath a gingham hood.

Digitized by Google

XXV

How many wake from their Elysian dream
To find love's garden overgrown with weeds.
A constant level makes a sluggish stream,
While dashing waters catch the rainbow's gleam
To paint the trout with freckles while he feeds.

XXVI

A pretty face with shining aureole
And eyes that lure as does the siren sea
Draws many a man upon a barren shoal;
But woman's love lifts high a human soul
And brims his cup with wine of Ecstasy.

XXVII

The soul that glows from out a woman's eyes
Who loves, and loves as only woman can,
Is proof there is another paradise:
A soul so great must live beyond the skies
That can with love redeem a worthless man.

Digitized by Google

XXVIII

Were I the guard of yonder pearly gate
I'd still be kind to all these patrons human
And overlook their frailties small or great—
Save his who had been brutal to his mate
Or faithless to a love-devoted woman.

XXIX

How slowly grow the virtues of the wise,
While evil springs without a single care;
How fiercely man will struggle for a prize
That seldom falls—and never satisfies—
When Heaven itself were his for just a prayer.

XXX

Some paths have roses, others have a thorn;
Some mount the rocks that border on the sea;
Some lead through desert-sand as if in scorn
Of vine-clad valleys rich with fruit and corn—
And yet all reach the same eternity.

Digitized by Google

XXXI

All vices banquet at the flowing bowl,
 But virtue never chants the ribald song.
Desires are steeds lashed to the chariot pole;
Let Reason drive lest we should lose control,
 For hands get weaker while the steeds grow strong.

XXXII

Pleasures are false that bring repentant pain:
 The soaring hawk, however swift he fly,
Cannot outstrip his shadow on the plain—
That low-flung specter follows till the twain
 Alight together on the crag hard by.

XXXIII

If gilded sin and common sin would tell
 The crimes which bear the brand of overdrinking,
Who'd make a thing or have it here to sell—
The *price* of which and *breath* of which is hell?
 The truth would set the careless world a-thinking.

Digitized by Google

XXXIV

The Power that made the world created man,
With mind to choose betwixt the good and ill;
The body dies, the spirit never can.
Then why should mortal question Heaven's plan?
Since God is God—and was—and ever will!

XXXV

We may not even *locate* Heaven aright—
For *up* is from the earth that constant turns;
Then *up* is opposite or day or night;
If Heaven be up it must surround us quite,
With no location for the place that burns.

XXXVI

Why doubt that which we cannot understand?
We cannot comprehend the things that be:
The ant upon the barren desert land
Believes the world is flat and made of sand,
Because, forsooth, it never saw the sea.

Digitized by Google

XXXVII

We may not measure time without a clock—
 How can we comprehend eternity?
As well dip out the ocean with a crock,
Or hurl below the fragment of a rock
 To fill the mountless fathoms of the sea.

XXXVIII

This monster world was made to swing in air
 By that Electric Will that bids it go.
The Skeptic knows, when reason plays him fair,
Those countless myriad planets everywhere
 Are moved by some Celestial Dynamo.

XXXIX

If Chance could fashion but a little flower
 With dainty perfume for each fairy thief,
And furnish it with sunshine and with shower,
Then Chance would be creator with the power
 To build another world for unbelief.

Digitized by Google

XL

Though none the Comet's mission comprehend,
Those blazing, spirit orbs we plainly see:
As though a loving God would constant send
Fleet messengers, whose journeys never end,
'Twixt earth and yonder vast Eternity.

XLI

A skeptic oft the Heavenly power denies
And hurls the scoffer's wineglass to the floor;
The truth still lives—but there the scoffer lies.
The fire is out and ashes are his eyes;
His mouth is shut—and I have closed the door.

XLII

If everything in Heaven's great mystery
Were well explained, we could not understand:
We did not recognize the Deity
Ev'n though He came a-walking on the sea:
We doubted once the nail-prints in his hand.

Digitized by Google

XLIII

Farther than figures mathematic show
 There speed the ever-flying Pleiades;
In orbit vaster than the mind may know:
In that Far Heaven no human thought can go,
 And yet the eye of every mortal sees!

XLIV

And if we told the children God lived where
 The Pleiads swing so far beyond the moon,
They would believe and thither lift their prayer—
So strive to live that Death would take them there—
 Since faith was ever childhood's blessed boon.

XLV

How bright the gems that crown night's atmosphere,
 Self-lighted airships poising there on high,
Till like a shooting-star descending sheer
They volplane swiftly to our whirling sphere
 To bear some waiting spirit to the sky.

Digitized by Google

XLVI

At moon's command, old ocean ebbs and flows,
By skill of man are continents cut through;
Sun, earth and moon their awful power oppose,
And yet it needs them all to make the rose
That blushes fragrance to a drop of dew.

XLVII

Man dives the sea and soars the azure sky;
Marvels of enginery his brain may plan;
Yet all achievements, when he comes to die,
Win naught of favor in the Master's eye
If he on earth love not his fellowman.

XLVIII

Far more is gained by kindness than by strife;
How few who know the worth of little deeds;
Life's battles are not won with drum and fife;
A smile may change the trend of human life;
And gifts are measured ever by their needs.

Digitized by Google

XLIX

That well-worn path where many children go,
 Leads to the spot where Optimist was lain;
The sunny life that kept his face aglow
Gave him a taste of Heaven here below
 And set these pretty cherubs in his train.

L

In yon far corner sleeps a Pessimist;
 No mourners came but his neglected deeds;
He sowed no grain and likewise ground no grist;
Through finding fault, the good in life he missed;
 No flowers for him save from the pitying weeds.

LI

The mortal boasts his strength of brawn and brain;
 His wireless wonders earth and ocean span;
Outsoars an eagle in his aeroplane;
Hurls armies forth to ply the craft of Cain—
 And yet the tiny microbe kills the man.

Digitized by Google

LII

Why should a mortal grumble at his fate?
 Knows he the schooling that his nature needs?
When tutored well he struts among the great,
But left untaught, how simple is his state—
 Not wiser than the brute the pasture feeds.

LIII

To save us from our self-indulgent will—
 Although we fret and grumble at our lot—
Kind Nature throttles us and makes us ill;
Puts us to bed with powder, draught and pill,
 And ofttimes saves our lives when we would not.

LIV

Let Sorrow play physician to the mind—
 Without its grief there's little to life's story;
Gold comes by fire and is by fire refined;
The freshened rose calls not the storm unkind;
 It needs the clouds to catch the sunset's glory.

Digitized by Google

LV

Time is the tapestry where mortals weave
 Life-pictures in an endless caravan;
Though much unlike designs they first conceive,
One golden glow all somber spots relieve—
 The Master Weaver's — "Peace! Good-will to man!"

LVI

How blest the feet that tread in righteous ways!
 How blest the heart that loves and knows not guile,
The hand that's helpful and the lip that prays—
The eye that shall behold with raptured gaze
 The benediction of the Master's smile.

LVII

We come into the world and know it not;
 We live in faith until we learn to doubt;
We use our brain to gather, scheme and plot;
At last, with enmity and greed forgot,
 Come back to childish faith—and then go out.

Digitized by Google

LVIII

The burning taper doth the wax consume,
 Which, like our bodies, serves its purpose well;
The more the flame, the faster flows the rheum—
But there's no burning more beyond the tomb—
 We snuff it out to cover up the smell.

LIX

The fool hath said, 'The *future* is in doubt—
 I'll have my fling in revels while alive!'
He learns before the *present's* half worn out,
Grim Retribution rides the selfsame route,
 Where all may pity him, but few may shrive.

LX

Nature supplies a stimulus within
 If we would bid our sluggish senses wake;
Why should we live to feast and stuff the skin
And boasting flirt with more indulgent sin?
 The brute gives answer with far less at stake.

Digitized by Google

LXI

God made the birds and melody took wing:
 Its perfume tells who made the matchless rose.
Our words, like bees, bear honey or a sting;
Our lives give echo to the songs we sing—
 A decent conscience fears no future woes.

LXII

Our worries kill more than the storms at sea;
 They kneel beside us when we are at prayer.
Oh, what a world to live in this would be
But for the cost—not e'en the grave is free;
 Eternal debt will find us even there.

LXIII

Yon Cynic held religion obsolete—
 Perhaps he changed his mind when Death was near—
He differed from his Maker by conceit;
Gaunt sophistry ate from his heart the meat;
 His autopsy showed little but a sneer.

Digitized by Google

LXIV

Out there sleeps one who mourned a world of sin
But overlooked his own—thus it befell
Saint Peter could not rightly let him in,
But gently bade him take his parchment skin
Where his asbestos face might serve him well.

LXV

Our humblest grave is yonder quiet plot,
Where lie the ashes of old Parson Good;
He lived for others and himself forgot;
But little deeds, on earth remembered not,
In Heaven count most—*so I have understood.*

LXVI

The best of many creeds, a mother's prayer;
No grip of sin would hold if memory
Would lead us often to the old armchair;
Life holds no treasured picture to compare
With children bowing at the Mother's knee.

Digitized by Google

LXVII

How pompously conceited men debate
On what is best to do with womankind;
Assuming to be monarchs of her fate
When Heaven created her to be the mate—
As wise, as good—*and quite as much refined.*

LXVIII

In all things, woman more than does her share
And hers should be one-half the revenue:
Her husband, home and children all her care—
Not till she takes that last long thoroughfare
Can one perceive how much had been her due.

LXIX

Divinely formed! God's masterpiece art thou;
Beyond the painter's skill, the sculptor's dream;
Fair as the sun-glow on the mountain's brow;
Man's lure and guide from Eden's blush till now
And in life's drama still the roseate theme.

Digitized by Google

LXX

With precious gems are woman's charms arrayed,
 Yet is her haloed love a choicer boon
Than all the jewels dug from earth's dark shade,
Like star-bits fallen when the heavens were made
 Or sculptor's chips dropped from the chiseled
 moon.

LXXI

Take *Gender* out of morals, women cry;
 Have men bring us the virtues they demand.
Set *Decency* in court the man to try
With that same law they judge the woman by—
 Let man be pure or wear the scarlet brand.

LXXII

A man with worthless, balky horse, alas,
 Will trade him off or shoot him for his hide;
Why not a woman, mated with an ass,
Trade off the beast or turn him out to grass—
 And mark the saving on the profit side?

Digitized by Google

LXXIII

With secret thoughts and deeds writ on the face,
How few would venture out save in a fog;
If dogs were fashioned from the human race
We'd have to borrow many a winsome grace
Of trust and faithfulness—or spoil the dog.

LXXIV

A kindly thought is more than half a prayer;
Each smile begets another smile for you;
A kiss will oft a breaking heart repair,
Erase a wrinkle from the brow of care,
Or plant a rose where roses are but few.

LXXV

Love is the source of all—keeps Heaven alight
Where golfers drive the stars in midnight play,
Like meteors athwart the links of night,
While angels trail their filmy robes in flight
To make night's mystery—*the Milky Way*.

Digitized by Google

LXXVI

Through senseless fear is Death so much maligned!
 Those who have met him made no great ado—
Nor to return have ever been inclined;
The open door he deftly hides behind,
 And none has shown a fear while passing through.

LXXVII

Our drowsy nerves can no sensation feel;
 We know not when we sleep nor when we die!
From out this tenement the soul will steal
Nor shut the door its absence to conceal,
 Nor stop to close the shutters of the eye.

LXXVIII

From seeming Death have myriads returned,
 Yet not a single pang did any feel:
The phantom barge from which they half-discerned
The Holy Citadel, for which they yearned,
 Had borne them hence had Death but pushed
 the keel.

Digitized by Google

LXXIX

Grim Death, stern mariner of worlds to come,
 Hath mortal never kindly word for thee?
Shall not the blind, the ailing and the dumb
Pay unto thee their first encomium
 For passage to the shores of Ecstasy?

LXXX

We build a house with matter we call *what*
 By using force from whence we cannot show;
By some strange motive of the mind begot,
We dig a grave in which our bodies rot—
 Philosophy beyond this cannot go.

LXXXI

Life in minute electrons doth begin;
 Eternity is only Time set free;
Philosophy's a garment far too thin
To wrap a dying mortal's conscience in!
 We're safer with the Man of Galilee.

Digitized by Google

LXXXII

I love all these confided to my keep
As mortals lodging at a sacred inn;
To dust their bodies changing while they sleep;
May not their evil sink into the deep
And earth absorb the odor of the sin?

LXXXIII

Their very silence seems an endless plea;
Think you that Mercy never listens now?
Behind Creation stands the Deity
With Hope raised high for all mankind to see
God's love redeem the world on Olive's brow.

LXXXIV

Upon the cross the thief repentant cries;
The shortest and the soonest answered prayer—
'O Lord, remember me!' The Lord replies,
'Today thou'lt be with me in Paradise!'
Which takes away from mortals all despair."

Digitized by Google

LXXXV

For one who digs at graves, you seem well bred—
Whence comes this wisdom? meaning no offense!
"From these I learn!" the quaint gravedigger said,
"They're bound to tell the truth to me when dead,
And wisdom after all is common sense!"

LXXXVI

Thus in the sexton's words the truth I read:
The love of God is round about us all,
Leaving no path for Doubt or Fear to tread;
'Twas man that sinned, but it was God who bled—
And Heaven's pardon far exceeds the fall.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google